



Scouts Australia NSW Fact Sheet

Reporting Child Protection Concerns

Why use this Guide?

Being a Leader in Scouts Australia NSW is a privilege. The excellence of the Scout Program and the safety of our Youth Members require a high standard in adult leadership, and Scouts takes pride in the quality of its Leaders.

This Fact Sheet will:

- Outline the Scouts NSW Reporting Procedure if you suspect or are aware of any child protection or abuse issues.
- Outline What You Should Do if you're concerned that a Youth Member is being abused.
- Give you some Tips For Keeping Youth Members Safe in your care and protecting them from abuse.
- Answer some Frequently Asked Questions about child abuse.

Scouts Doesn't Tolerate Abuse!

Scouts Australia NSW is committed to the health, safety and wellbeing of its Members. Scouts has zero tolerance for abuse of any kind - physical, verbal, emotional or sexual abuse of its Members.

Report Child Protection Concerns and Abuse!

Scouts NSW works with NSW Police, NSW Community Services (formerly DoCS), the NSW Commission for Children and Young People, and other relevant authorities to address any child protection concerns.

All suspicions, concerns or allegations about criminal matters or child protection matters should be reported directly to the Chief Commissioner, the Chief Executive or the Child Protection Officer at State Office on 9735 9000. Once we receive a notification, the Association will make an immediate report to the relevant authorities.

If an individual has made a report to NSW Police, NSW Community Services, or another relevant authority, they should also report the matter to the Chief Commissioner, the Chief Executive or the Child Protection Officer. The Association will then make direct contact with the relevant authority about the matter.

Reporting to the Association enables the Association to work directly with the authorities in managing the matter. It enables the Association to take immediate action under its Behavioural Management Policy, in consultation with the authorities.

Imminent Danger

If a young person is in imminent danger, the matter should be reported directly and immediately to NSW Police on 131 444.

Are we “mandatory reporters”?

No.

Mandatory reporters are people who are legally required to report suspicions of child abuse to NSW Community Services. Scout Leaders are not mandatory reporters, but Scouts makes it compulsory for Leaders to report child protection concerns using the procedure outlined in this guide.

How Does Scouts Australia NSW protect Youth Members?

Scouts NSW has a number of screening processes in place to try to ensure that all Members are suitable for Membership with Scouts, and that they do not represent a danger to young people or the community.

Scouts Australia NSW screens its Leaders to prevent known offenders from becoming Leaders. It requires all Leaders to sign a Volunteer Declaration stating they are not a prohibited person.

We are currently working with the NSW Commission for Children and Young People in relation to the new Working With Children Check requirements that will be introduced in 2013. Under the new requirements, volunteers will also be subject to the Working With Children Check. Currently, the Check is only available for employees. Everyone who is issued a clearance under the Check will still be continuously monitored for serious sex or violence offences.

Find out more: <http://kids.nsw.gov.au/kids/working/newcheck#ixzz29VvtWafW>.

In addition, Scouts NSW conducts random and ongoing Police Record Checks on all Leaders. An adult is not permitted to begin training until the Check has been conducted. Finally, Scouts trains all Leaders in issues relating to dealing with children.

Scouts has strict procedures in place for responding to any allegations of concerns about child protection.

Reporting Child Abuse Concerns**I think a Youth Member is being abused - what do I do?**

You might have a concern about a Youth Member being abused because a Youth Member or someone else tells you about it, or because a Youth Member's behaviour/injuries give you concern.

Tell someone!

Denying your uncomfortable feelings may result in inappropriate behaviour getting overlooked (e.g. "I thought something funny was going on but didn't feel right about saying anything", "That behaviour seems inappropriate but he/she's a really good Leader- he/she couldn't do anything like that!", "I didn't want to get the Association into trouble").

You should tell someone – See below.

Scouts makes it compulsory for Leaders to report child protection concerns using the procedure outlined in this guide.

What does “child abuse” really mean?

“Child abuse” can refer to neglect, sexual abuse, physical abuse, or psychological abuse.

- Neglect is when a parent constantly fails to provide a child with the basic things they need, like food, shelter and medical treatment.
- Physical abuse is when someone causes harm and non-accidental injuries to a child.
- Sexual abuse is when someone involves a child in a sexual activity by using their power over them or taking advantage of their trust.
- Psychological abuse is when someone damages the confidence and self-esteem of a child, consistently and over a period of time. It may include things like being really critical of the child, intimidating them, or putting them down.

What if the media contacts me?

The Chief Commissioner and the Chief Executive act as the Scouts spokespersons for the media, to ensure that any media reports reflect positively and accurately on the Scouts movement and Members.

Leaders who are approached by the media about Scouting should refer the media to the Communications and Development Manager at State Office on 9735 9000.

Scouts Australia NSW acknowledges the contribution of Dr Warwick Bateman AM in the development of this Fact Sheet.